

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10-26, 28-55 are present in this application. Claims 3, 12-19, 22, and 30-37 have been withdrawn. Claims 9 and 27 have been canceled, and incorporated into claims 1 and 20, respectively. Claims 1, 6, 20, 25, 43, and 51 are independent.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 5-9, 24-27, 40-43, and 48-51 had been indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Based in this indication, the claims have been re-written in order to place the application in condition for allowance.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 9.

Allowable claims 6 and 43 have been re-written into independent form.

Claim 20 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 27.

Allowable claims 25 and 51 have been re-written into independent form.

All other claims depend from the above amended or re-written independent claims.

Accordingly, Applicants believe that all pending claims pertain to allowable subject matter. Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections based on the claims as amended or re-written.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) - Fukushima

Claims 1, 10, 20, 28, 38, 46, 54, and 55 had been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,253,023 (Fukushima).

As noted above, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate subject matter from allowable claim 9, and claim 20 has been amended to incorporate subject matter from allowable claim 27. Applicants submits that the rejection no longer applies.

Applicants request that the rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 2 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Fukushima in view of Tamura et al. (2004/0169730); claims 4 and 23 stand rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over Fukushima in view of Iizuka (JP 09-288684); claims 11 and 29 stand rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over Fukushima in view of Safai (U.S. Patent 6, 715,003); claims 39 and 47 stand rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over Fukushima in view of Iizuka and further in view of Shibata (JP 56152368); claims 44, 45, 52, and 53 stand rejected as allegedly unpatentable over Fukushima. Based on the amendment to claims 1 and 20 as noted above, Applicants submit that these rejections no longer apply.

Applicants request that the rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this matter, she is respectfully requested to contact Robert W. Downs (Reg. No. 48,222), who may be reached in the Washington, DC, area at (703) 205-8000.

Application No. 09/884,051
Amendment dated May 30, 2006
Reply to Office Action of February 28, 2006

Docket No.: 3562-0117P

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this concurrent and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: May 30, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Michael R. Cammarata

Registration No.: 39,491

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant